



*A Partnership To Restore And Protect The Sound*

## Supporting the Sound

### WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP THE SOUND?

Cleaning up and protecting Long Island Sound (LIS) is a complicated and expensive process, involving scientists, elected officials, regulatory agencies, educators, and others -- but where do citizens fit in? The answer is: *almost everywhere!* Each individual can do something. Find the level of involvement you are most comfortable with. The truth is that without public involvement and support, pollution of the Sound will continue. The battle for cleaning up LIS is being fought on many fronts, and there are many ways that you, as a concerned citizen, can help. It's easy, and can be fun and rewarding!

Here are four ways you can get involved:

- make small and large changes in personal habits to benefit the Sound,
- become informed,
- become involved by joining a marine user group or citizen action group, and
- communicate with elected officials.

The suggested actions listed below will give you an idea of how and where to get started. As you contact some of the people working for the Sound, you'll likely discover other options in your area. However you choose to become involved, it's important that you ***make your voice heard!***

#### ★ Individual Efforts:

##### *In the home*

Landscape in ways not harmful to the plants and animals of Long Island Sound. Use native vegetation, which provides habitat for other species. Leave grass clippings on the lawn to recycle nutrients. Limit use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers in your garden and lawn by substituting natural products and techniques. Call Sea Grant for **Sound Gardening** educational materials.

Conserve water at home and in the office. You can reduce the volume of waste water that must be treated by a sewage treatment plant or septic system. This will increase the efficiency of treatment and save you money.

Never pour motor oil or other auto fluids down a drain or sewer or discard them with the trash (in

Connecticut and New York, it is against the law!). New York State requires most service stations to accept motor oil for recycling. In Connecticut, municipal recycling stations accept motor oil for recycling. Some service stations will accept brake and transmission fluids and antifreeze; if not, save these in separate containers for local hazardous waste pickups.

To minimize malfunctioning avoid adding unnecessary kitchen grease and solids to septic systems. Inspect septic tanks annually, and pump out every three to five years. An improperly working septic system can contaminate ground water flowing to local streams and can pollute Long Island Sound.

Use as few hazardous products as possible. When you must, use those labelled CAUTION, as these are less toxic than products labelled DANGER or WARNING. Buy only as much of the products as you need; you will then eventually throw out only the container, not the toxic substance it contained. Remember that substances poured down drains, storm sewers, or on the land are likely to be transported to the Sound.

Learn how to properly dispose of the toxic products that you use. Many counties and municipalities have hazardous waste collection days. Call your local waste or sanitation department for a schedule.

Don't be a litterbug! Never throw litter, especially plastic, into the street, down storm drains, or onto the beach. Reduce-Reuse-Recycle as much as possible. Rainfall carries the trash into the sewers where it eventually travels into the Sound threatening fish and wildlife that may become entangled in it and it can threaten the safety of boaters.

If you live in Connecticut, buy a Long Island Sound License Plate and help benefit the Sound by funding projects to improve habitat restoration, public access, public education and outreach and research. Call 1-800-CT-SOUND for information and order forms.

### ***In and on the Sound***

Boaters, remember it is illegal to discharge wastes from a Type III (holding Tank) marine sanitation device. Pump-out facilities must be used to prevent release of pathogens directly into coastal waters. Contact the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection and New York Sea Grant for a guide to marine pumpout facilities.

Individuals should pick up pet waste and dispose it in a toilet or in the trash. Pet waste contains bacteria and viruses that can contaminate shellfish and be a reason for closing beaches.

Be sure that you gather all six-pack rings and other plastic items for proper disposal. If they are washed into the Sound, marine animals may eat these items or become entangled in them.

Encourage anglers, hunters and commercial fishermen to adhere to applicable management measures and regulations to minimize non-harvest mortality (catch and release, discards).

### ***In Your Community***

- ☐ Participate in policy decisions and attend public meetings, such as your local planning and zoning, conservation or wetlands commission meetings. Speak out on local issues that can have ramifications for your town and Long Island Sound.

- ☐ Organize citizen water quality monitoring efforts or participate in an ongoing program.
- ☐ Organize beach cleanup efforts or participate in an ongoing program.
- ☐ Organize a storm drain stenciling project in your neighborhood.
- ☐ Participate in beach grass plantings.

*For more information on how to do the things listed in this section just contact any office on the last page.*

### ★Become Informed

So everyone concerned about the Sound can become more informed, the Long Island Sound Study (LISS) publishes a quarterly newsletter. To be added to the LISS mailing list, please fill out the coupon on the last page and return to the New York office. By becoming more knowledgeable, you will be a more convincing advocate for the Sound in your conversations with friends and neighbors. In addition, you will be able to identify organizations, programs, and elected officials that share your concerns. Detailed information on the Sound is available from a number of educational organizations. Contact the LIS Office for organizations in your area.

## Look for us on the World Wide Web

<http://www.epa.gov/region01/eco/lis/>

### ★ Become Involved

If you use LIS to swim, fish, scuba dive, or boat, there is probably a "user group" in your area that represents people who share your particular interest in the Sound. These organizations often have a LIS agenda of some kind, and may be active in fund-raising or lobbying efforts. Ask around at your local marina, bait shop, dive shop, beach, or the LIS Office.

Citizen groups take an active role in issues that affect LIS on a local, regional, or national level. Joining a citizen group typically involves going to meetings and supporting staff people who serve as environmental watchdogs, lobbying for particular programs, or taking legal action on behalf of the group. Citizen groups are an important part of the partnership needed to effectively clean up the Sound.

### ★ Contact Elected Officials

Voice your concerns about LIS directly to elected officials. Find out who your local, state, and federal government representatives are and let them know that the Sound is important to you. Because many decisions affecting the Sound are made at the local level, you can personally make an impact by interacting with municipal commissions. Your input really can make a difference!

**However you choose to get involved, it's important to make your voice heard! The future of the Sound depends on people like you getting involved in the process and doing good deeds.**

### THE LONG ISLAND SOUND STUDY

The Long Island Sound Study (LISS) is a research and management project that began in 1985 as part of the National Estuary Program, a section of the federal Clean Water Act created to protect estuaries of national importance. The LISS is a cooperative effort involving research institutions, regulatory agencies, marine user groups, and other concerned organizations and individuals. The Study produced a plan (completed in March of 1994) to clean up and protect the Sound. The Plan is being implemented by the Environmental Protection Agency and the states of Connecticut and New York. The Sea Grant Program in New York assists with public outreach activities including fact sheets, lectures, and workshops. For more information on the Study or LISS public education activities, contact:

EPA LIS Office  
Stamford Government Center  
888 Washington Blvd.  
Stamford, CT 06904-2152  
(203)977-1541

CT DEP  
Office of LIS Programs  
79 Elm Street  
Hartford, CT 06106-5127  
(860)424-3607

EPA LIS Office  
Marine Science Research Center  
SUNY  
Stony Brook, NY 11794-5000  
(516)632-9216

NYS DEC  
Division of Marine Resources  
205 Belle Meade Road  
East Setauket, NY 11733  
(516)444-0467

This fact sheet was produced by Chester Arnold, Connecticut Sea Grant Marine Advisory Program and revised December 1995 by Kimberly Zimmer, New York Sea Grant Extension Program for the Long Island Sound Study.

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**To be placed on the mailing list, please tear off and return this coupon to: EPA Long Island Sound Office, Marine Science Research Center, SUNY, Stony Brook, NY 11794-5000.**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ORGANIZATION (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
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PHONE \_\_\_\_\_